

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1           1. A polarizing device useful for polarizing a piezoelectric material  
2 having two surfaces in high-temperature gas, the polarizing device comprising:

3                 temperature-raising portion for raising the temperature of the  
4 piezoelectric material to a temperature required to polarize the piezoelectric  
5 material; and

6                 a constant-temperature bath having an atmosphere of gas that is kept at  
7 the required temperature, the constant-temperature bath incorporating a polarizing  
8 portion for polarizing the piezoelectric material while the temperature of the  
9 piezoelectric material is kept at the required temperature.

1           2. A polarizing device according to Claim 1, wherein the constant-  
2 temperature bath further comprises an aging portion for performing an aging  
3 operation on the piezoelectric material that has been polarized by the polarizing  
4 portion.

1           3. A polarizing device according to Claim 1, wherein the  
2 temperature-raising portion is configured and arranged to heat both surfaces of the  
3 piezoelectric material.

1           4. A polarizing device according to Claim 3, wherein the  
2 temperature-raising portion includes radiating heating means for heating one of the  
3 surfaces of the piezoelectric material by radiation of heat.

1           5. A polarizing device according to Claim 3, wherein the  
2 temperature-raising portion includes means for directly heating one of the surfaces  
3 of the piezoelectric material.

1           6. A polarizing device according to Claim 1, further comprising:  
2           a transport mechanism for transporting the piezoelectric material from  
3           the temperature-raising portion to the constant-temperature bath; and  
4           a control portion that controls transportation of the transport mechanism.

1           7. A polarizing device according to Claim 6,  
2           wherein the control portion controls a time selected from the group  
3           consisting of:  
4                 time for raising the temperature of the piezoelectric material by  
5                 the temperature-raising portion;  
6                 time for setting the temperature of the piezoelectric material at a  
7                 constant temperature inside the constant-temperature bath;  
8                 time for polarizing the piezoelectric material by the polarizing  
9                 portion; and  
10                time for performing an aging operation, wherein the constant-  
11                temperature bath further comprises an aging portion for performing an aging  
12                operation on the piezoelectric material that has been polarized by the polarizing  
13                portion; and  
14                combinations thereof;  
15                wherein the control portion controls in order to control the transportation  
16                of the transport mechanism based on the above time controlling operations.

1           8. A polarizing device according to Claim 7, wherein the control  
2           portion controls the time of each operation so as to be substantially the same.

1           9. A polarizing device according to Claim 6, further comprising a  
2           transport jig for receiving the piezoelectric material, the transport mechanism  
3           transporting the transport jig.

1           10. A polarizing device according to Claim 9,  
2                       wherein the transport jig comprises a pallet including a bottom  
3                       wall, a piezoelectric material holdable recess, and a through hole in the bottom  
4                       wall; and

5                               the temperature-raising portion further comprising means for  
6                       direct heating including a hot plate, the hot plate including heat transmitting  
7                       protrusion and a heat transmitting contact surface, the heat transmitting protrusion  
8                       being configured and arranged to be insertable into the through hole of the pallet  
9                       and to be contactable through the through hole with a bottom surface of the  
10                  piezoelectric material when accommodated in the recess, and the heat transmitting  
11                  contact surface being contactable with a bottom surface of the pallet.

1           11. A method of polarizing a piezoelectric material inside high-  
2                       temperature gas, the method comprising the steps of:

3                       raising the temperature of the piezoelectric material to a temperature  
4                       required to polarize the piezoelectric material; and  
5                       polarizing the piezoelectric material by placing the piezoelectric material  
6                       into an atmosphere of gas the temperature of which is maintained at the required  
7                       temperature.

1           12. A method of polarizing a piezoelectric material inside high-  
2                       temperature gas according to Claim 11, further comprising the step:  
3                       of performing an aging operation on the polarized piezoelectric material  
4                       in the same atmosphere of gas.

1           13. A polarizing device according to Claim 1, further comprising:  
2                       a piezoelectric material in the polarizing device.

1           14. A polarizing device according to Claim 5, wherein the means for  
2 direct heating comprises a hot plate, the hot plate including heat transmitting  
3 protrusions and a heat transmitting contact surface.